

Suicidal Feelings: How to Help Yourself

Suicide is when you end your own life. There are many things you can do to help yourself feel better when struggling with these feelings. Many services and people are available to support you and others who struggle with similar feelings.

If you ever feel like you may hurt yourself or others, or have thoughts about taking your own life, get help right away. To get help:

- **Call your local emergency services (911 in the U.S.).**
- **Go to your nearest emergency department.**
- **Call a suicide hotline to speak with a trained counselor.** The following suicide hotlines are available in the United States:
 - 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).
 - 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433).
 - 1-888-628-9454. This is a hotline for Spanish speakers.
 - 1-800-799-4889. This is a hotline for TTY users.
 - 1-866-4-U-TREVOR (1-866-488-7386). This is a hotline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.
 - For a list of hotlines in Canada, visit www.suicide.org/hotlines/international/canada-suicide-hotlines.html
- **Contact a crisis center or a local suicide prevention center.** To find a crisis center or suicide prevention center:
 - Call your local hospital, clinic, community service organization, mental health center, social service provider, or health department. Ask for help with connecting to a crisis center.
 - For a list of crisis centers in the United States, visit: suicidepreventionlifeline.org
 - For a list of crisis centers in Canada, visit: suicideprevention.ca

How to help yourself feel better

- Promise yourself that you will not do anything extreme when you have suicidal feelings. Remember, there is hope. Many people have gotten through suicidal thoughts and feelings, and you can too. If you have had these feelings before, remind yourself that you can get through them again.
- Let family, friends, teachers, or counselors know how you are feeling. Try not to separate yourself from those who care about you and want to help you. Talk with someone every day, even if you do not feel sociable. Face-to-face conversation is best to help them understand your feelings.
- Contact a mental health care provider and work with this person regularly.
- Make a safety plan that you can follow during a crisis. Include phone numbers of suicide prevention hotlines, mental health professionals, and trusted friends and family members you can call during an emergency. Save these numbers on your phone.
- If you are thinking of taking a lot of medicine, give your medicine to someone who can give it to you as prescribed. If you are on antidepressants and are concerned you will overdose, tell your health care provider so that he or she can give you safer medicines.
- Try to stick to your routines. Follow a schedule every day. Make self-care a priority.
- Make a list of realistic goals, and cross them off when you achieve them. Accomplishments can give you a sense of worth.



- Wait until you are feeling better before doing things that you find difficult or unpleasant.
- Do things that you have always enjoyed to take your mind off your feelings. Try reading a book, or listening to or playing music. Spending time outside, in nature, may help you feel better.

Follow these instructions at home:

- Visit your primary health care provider every year for a checkup.
- Work with a mental health care provider as needed.
- Eat a well-balanced diet, and eat regular meals.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Exercise if you are able. Just 30 minutes of exercise each day can help you feel better.
- Take over-the-counter and prescription medicines only as told by your health care provider. Ask your mental health care provider about the possible side effects of any medicines you are taking.
- **Do not** use alcohol or drugs, and remove these substances from your home.
- Remove weapons, poisons, knives, and other deadly items from your home.



General recommendations

- Keep your living space well lit.
- When you are feeling well, write yourself a letter with tips and support that you can read when you are not feeling well.
- Remember that life's difficulties can be sorted out with help. Conditions can be treated, and you can learn behaviors and ways of thinking that will help you.

Where to find more information

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Hopeline: www.hopeline.com
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org
- The Trevor Project (for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth): www.thetrevorproject.org

Contact a health care provider if:

- You feel as though you are a burden to others.
- You feel agitated, angry, vengeful, or have extreme mood swings.
- You have withdrawn from family and friends.

Get help right away if:

- You are talking about suicide or wishing to die.
- You start making plans for how to commit suicide.
- You feel that you have no reason to live.
- You start making plans for putting your affairs in order, saying goodbye, or giving your possessions away.
- You feel guilt, shame, or unbearable pain, and it seems like there is no way out.
- You are frequently using drugs or alcohol.
- You are engaging in risky behaviors that could lead to death.

If you have any of these symptoms, get help right away. Call emergency services, go to your nearest emergency department or crisis center, or call a suicide crisis helpline.

Summary

- Suicide is when you take your own life.
- Promise yourself that you will not do anything extreme when you have suicidal feelings.
- Let family, friends, teachers, or counselors know how you are feeling.
- Get help right away if you feel as though life is getting too tough to handle and you are thinking about suicide.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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